

**PPQ Stakeholders Meeting
December 10, 2003
Breakout Session Summary**

Incident Command Partnerships Panel Discussion

Panel Members:

1. Charles Schwalbe, *Assistant Deputy Administrator, Pest Detection and Management Programs, PPQ*
2. Fred Small, *Vice-President, Montana/Wyoming Indian Stock Growers Association*
3. Ann Bartuska, *Executive Director, Invasive Species Initiative, Nature Conservancy*
4. Greg Powers, *Incident Command Training, USDA, Office of Homeland Security*
5. Charles Kauffman, *National Plant Board, West Virginia Department of Agriculture*
6. Facilitator: Jane Berkow, APHIS/PPD and Recorder: Linda Card, PPQ/PDC

I. Purpose: To identify and discuss the roles of Federal, State, Tribal and Industry players in the Incident Command System

II. Synopsis of Panelist's Presentations

1) Ann Bartuska, Executive Director, Invasive Species Initiative, TNC

Ann thought that an effective Incident Command System (ICS) should consist of an effective system of detection and reporting which would allow PPQ to identify and quickly eradicate new pests. She said that the issue of identification and vouchering could be resolved by strengthening existing databases. Ann said that aggressively promoting a system for early detection plus ability to respond quickly should be PPQ's number one priority. She told members of the group that because this has gotten a lot of publicity lately, there are many opportunities for PPQ to develop principles of response with many stakeholders. She suggested that PPQ use the Fire ICS Model for developing an effective invasive species plan. For the rapid response issues, Ann agreed with many others that an effective ICS plan is easier said than done because of continuity of funding and the need to create flexible response between all PPQ partners. Ann concluded that the public is interested in preserving conservation. Because of this she believes that interested people could be trained to detect bad organisms. This could be done with a broad-based group of volunteers by connecting them with professionals in order to develop an effective early detection system.

2) Chuck Schwalbe, Assistant Deputy Administrator, PPQ

According to Chuck, nobody ever says early detection with out saying rapid response in the same sentence. He said that he believes that more attention should be paid to a rapid response system. He asked the group how we can better launch responses to what we are finding on a regular basis. He used the example of 50 thousand ash trees already burned because of effective coordination and communication within the current ICS structure. He told the group that he believes that there is a need to set up a system which will provide the stamina to finish the job. Chuck questioned APHIS' authority line and asked the group to ponder who has the authority to do what needs to be done—federal government or states. He said that in order for the ICS to be effective, it must incorporate technology so resources can be quickly identified and requisitioned

during an incident. He believes this can be done by involving members from private industry and academics. Chuck told the group that an infrastructure needs to be created with a large personnel pool for emergencies. He said that PPQ could use state, tribal governments, and private organizations to form some kind of coalition to respond to an incident. Having made all these observations, Chuck said that he believed training is most important. He said that when developing a network of cooperators, we should use the same words to describe work being done. PPQ should tie infrastructure and training together with the SPHD in each state to create a basic infrastructure for response which can be used as the key management unit for response.

3) Charlie Kauffman, *National Plant Board*

Charlie felt that it is the state cooperators responsibility to deploy personnel within the ICS. He emphasized that “cooperator” is the key word. He said that he believed that the use of a formal ICS is a federal issue because the states are not sure of their role in the ICS. He said that many states knew the terminology but had no detailed knowledge of the system in the 19 states that were surveyed. He said that 10 states had some training through animal health in agriculture or they were on the verge of training. Many states knew the terminology, but no detailed understanding of the system. Two states were drafting plans for specific pests but not for general plans. Charlie said that there were no coordinated plans to train in place throughout the states like in West Virginia. He said that he feels that the primary linkage of states to PPQ is the CAPS Program because it is a work in progress with clearly defined roles and responsibilities in the ICS.

4) Fred Small, *Vice-President, Montana/Wyoming Indian Stock Growers Association*

Fred told the group that the American Indian tribes realized the need for an emergency response system for their reservations. ICS was clearly demonstrated during the mad cow disease outbreak in Great Britain and the September 11th tragedy. He said the tribe used the fire model for a system in a remote area. He told members of the stakeholders group that any kind of outbreak on the reservation is harder because of rough terrain, distance and poor communications. He feels that there is a strong need to address training exercises for emergency situations. Trainers should go to remote areas for a visit in order to see needs on reservations. He said that tribes have easily adapted to the ICS and that other agencies need training.

5) Greg Power, *USDA, Office of Homeland Security, Incident Command Training*

Greg referred to the new mandate President Bush just signed: the National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) that will be used by all government responders to emergency situations. Greg described the NIMS/ICS as an on-scene emergency management system which requires training certifications and use of technology. He said that courses taught by the National Wild Land Firefighting School in Boise, Idaho have allowed USDA to rewrite its suite of ICS courses for agency use. The first two courses are web based training for specific incident command issues. They will be available by March 1, 2004. In late fall, incident management teams in fire-quick mobilization and response courses will be available for training use. He went on to say that USDA taps into the fire teams resources on a regular basis. Because of this, USDA has decided to develop its own training for incident management teams using this training model for tabletop exercises. He urged private stakeholders in the group to tap into the USDA resources through their experts and to make contacts with first responders, technical specialists or serve on a board at their local level.

III. Group Discussion Points

Members of the breakout group voiced their individual concerns and needs within their own states and communities proving the need for clear-cut guidance and the need for a flexible ICS plan within PPQ. Here are some of the key issues raised:

Use of Volunteers:

Q: When you are accessing both private and public properties, how is the best way to use volunteers? B. Mungari was concerned about liability in case a volunteer gets hurt. He asked, “What are the confines for volunteers? Should we do background investigations on volunteers?”

A: Chuck said that PPQ is currently putting together a guidebook of rules for volunteers for pest detection. He went on to say that volunteers get treated the same as an employee. They just don’t get paid for their services. Chuck also said that volunteers are not big players in responding to pest detection. He believes that volunteers should be used for surveillance and monitoring because regulatory functions bring up different types of liabilities. He used the example of accessing private properties.

ICS Structure:

Q: Michael Hornyak said that they used the Florida Forestry ICS in the South Florida area and it was a very effective system. However, as things began to get more routine, courts interfered, some of the structure of the ICS was no longer necessary. His question---Is the ICS appropriate for a multi-year program? He said that as activities became so specialized, they grew into their own form. He said that overall management became diluted. There was too much time spent in meetings.

A: The ICS is not a rigid system. It is very flexible. Greg said that you should use what you need to respond. Chuck said that there is no magic formula, just a model organizational approach. The main advantage to this is that you can move more seamlessly between organizations.

Authority over an Incident:

Q: Bobby (NASDA) wanted to know---How much planning do you do? Who’s in charge is the biggest problem. He believes that there is a need for authority guidelines for who’s in charge. He said that it often goes to a program responsibility instead of an incident responsibility.

Bobby wanted to know what happens when you’re on someone’s property because of the authority issue. He feels that the responsibility has to be changed from federal to state when it comes to access to farms. The states usually have authority to go onto farms where federal officials do not have the same authority. He said that each state will have to look at their circumstances (jurisdictional liabilities etc.).

A: Greg said that in a pure ICS, the agency administrator provides a delegation of authority to the ICS. Then he steps back and allows the ICS commander to run the show. This allows the ICS to do its job without outside interference. With the ICS, command can be either singular or multiple jurisdictional areas. Multiple jurisdictional areas have 2 incident commanders. Fred said that PPQ needs to establish more MOUs. He said that only 8 tribes have MOUs with PPQ & cooperators which clearly establish roles and responsibilities during the time of an

emergency. He said not to get territorial. The first 48 hours during an emergency are the most critical. Number 1 goal should be to stop the outbreak

Making the Decision about an emergency situation, when & how to respond:

Q: How do we make the determination of whether we have a management response or actual ICS response? How will the group collectively make a quick decision of how to handle issues?

A: Chuck said that PPQ is learning how as a group to make better decisions on how to deal with invasive pests. We've done a pretty good job so far. Fred Small noted, "We all have a responsibility to have a safe food supply. Use good scientific information to base decisions and be more aggressive in this area." According to Charlie, we need to gear the whole system to make decisions when issues pop up. Slow-motion situations (slow decision making process including addressing the funding issue) needs to be addressed. Sometimes, ICS does not apply to all situations. The decision point to act or not is critical. Matt Royer (PPQ) stated that we must work together to determine how we'll deal with pests. We must use diagnostic tools so we need to have them immediately. Define risk assessments in a context that enables the programs to be tweaked when necessary.

Funding:

Q: How do states deal with the funding issue? In plant diseases we sit around and wait for someone to make a decision to act on funding. Funding will remain a critical issue. Because of this, it should be a part of any MOU established.

A: Chuck stated that usually there is time to get information and to make a decision. Funding is driven by political issues or vested interests. It deters implementing ICS. We need to get the administrators on board. Ann Bartuska suggested emergency contingency funds need to be put in place so that the funding issue does not slow down PPQ's ability to respond to an emergency situation in a timely fashion.

Legal Issues:

The point was made that it was critical to manage the publicity side of emergencies because it can distort what PPQ is trying to do, without the scientific understanding of the issue and before you know it, you are in court to accomplish what you need to do to eradicate pests. This is particularly true in urban settings. Michael Hornyak (FL) and Bob Mungari (NY) cited legal issues they have had to face in their respective states.

IV. Summary Presentation to Plenary Session

- Continue to improve National Pest Advisory Group (NPAG) Program
- Every state should develop an Emergency Response Plan with clear goals and include State & local government, Non-Governmental Organizations and Stakeholders to respond to detection and rapid response
- The planning process must include potential barriers, such as legal issues, opportunities, and the partners who can help address the barriers
- The plans and programs need to be grounded in sound science (Detection, ID, survey, mitigation and response)
- PPQ needs to inform potential partners re: potential available resources to respond to emergencies.